

American Indians and Alaska Natives have left an indelible imprint on many aspects of our everyday life that most Americans often take for granted. The arts, education, science, medicine, industry, and government are areas that have been influenced by American Indian and Alaska Native people over the last 500 years. Many of the healing remedies that we use today were obtained from practices already in use by Indian people and are still utilized today in conjunction with western medicine.

Mr. President, many of the basic principles of democracy in our Constitution can be traced to practices and customs already in use by American Indian tribal governments including the doctrines of freedom of speech and separation of powers. Our Founding Fathers benefited greatly from the example of the Indian tribes in the early stages of our Nation.

The respect of Native people for the preservation of natural resources, reverence for elders, and adherence to tradition, mirrors our own values which we developed in part, through the contact with American Indians and Alaska Natives. These values and customs are deeply rooted, strongly embraced and thrive with generation after generation of Native people.

From the difficult days of Valley Forge through our peace keeping efforts around the world today, American Indian and Alaska Native people have proudly served and dedicated their lives in the military readiness and defense of our country in wartime and in peace. In fact, their participation rate in the Armed Forces far outstrips the rates of all other groups in this Nation. Many American Indian men and women gave their lives selflessly in the defense of this Nation even before they were granted American citizenship in 1924.

Many of the words in our language have been borrowed from Native languages, including many of the names of the rivers, cities, and States across our Nation. Indian arts and crafts have also made a distinct impression on our heritage.

It is my hope that by designating the month of November 1999, as "National American Indian Heritage Month," we will continue to encourage self-esteem, pride, and self awareness amongst American Indians and Alaska Natives of all ages. Many schools, organizations, Federal, State, Tribal and local governments can also plan activities and programs to celebrate the achievements of American Indians and Alaska Natives.

November is a special time in the history of the United States; we celebrate the Thanksgiving holiday by remembering the American Indians and English settlers as they enjoyed the bounty of their harvest and the promise of new kinships. By recognizing the many Native contributions to the arts, governance, and culture of our Nation, we will honor their past and ensure a

place in America for Native people for generations to come. I ask for the support of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for this resolution, and urge the Senate to pass this important matter.

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. President, I want to pay tribute to and recognize the contributions Native Americans and Indian tribes have made in the United States and in particular in the State of Oregon. Native Americans have a unique and important relationship with the United States, and Indian tribes continue to persevere in upholding their sovereign governments, economies, culture and heritage. I am pleased to join Senators CAMPBELL and INOUE in submitting this resolution to designate this month as American Indian Heritage Month, and I appreciate their efforts on behalf of all Native Americans.

There are nine federally recognized tribes in the State of Oregon. Each of these tribes has successfully collaborated with State and Federal agencies and continues to develop active partnerships with the surrounding communities.

Five of Oregon's tribes are located in Western Oregon: The Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz, the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua, and Siuslaw, Coquille Indian Tribe, and the Cow Creek Band of Umpquas. Each of the tribes has made its own extraordinary contribution in Oregon and the Pacific Northwest region. The five tribes of Western Oregon have been successful in recent years in restoring their Federal recognition as Indian tribes, and they continue to work to stabilize and revitalize their social, cultural, and economic ties with the State and local communities.

There are four tribes located east of Oregon's Cascade Mountains. The Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation, in Easter Oregon, have been successful in their conservation and restoration of salmon and water back into the Umatilla River. The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, in Central Oregon, with their Kah-Nee-Ta Resort, have been making significant contributions to Oregon's tourism industry. The Burns Paiute and Klamath Tribes have renewed a foothold in the local economy.

Mr. President, I commend the contributions Native American people have brought to my State and this nation. American Indian Heritage Month is an important recognition to the accomplishments and contributions of Native Americans in our country. I urge my colleagues to join us in support of this resolution and I look forward to its prompt consideration.

SENATE RESOLUTION 217—RELATING TO THE FREEDOM OF BELIEF, EXPRESSION, AND ASSOCIATION IN THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Mr. HUTCHINSON submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. RES. 217

Whereas the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights affirm the freedoms of thought, conscience, religion, expression, and assembly as fundamental human rights belonging to all people;

Whereas the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, including the People's Republic of China, a member of the United Nations;

Whereas the People's Republic of China has signed the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights but has yet to ratify the treaty and thereby make it legally binding;

Whereas the Constitution of the People's Republic of China provides for the freedom of religious belief and the freedom not to believe;

Whereas according to the Department of State and international human rights organizations, the Government of the People's Republic of China does not provide these freedoms but continues to restrict unregistered religious activities and persecutes persons on the basis of their religious practice through measures including harassment, prolonged detention, physical abuse, incarceration, and police closure of places of worship;

Whereas under the International Religious Freedom Act, the Secretary of State has designated the People's Republic of China as a country of special concern;

Whereas the Government of the People's Republic of China has issued a decree declaring a wide range of activities illegal and subject to prosecution, including distribution of Falun Gong materials, gatherings or silent sit-ins, marches or demonstrations, and other activities to promote Falun Gong and has begun the trials of several Falun Gong practitioners;

Whereas the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China on October 30, 1999, adopted a new law banning and criminalizing groups labeled by the Government of the People's Republic of China as cults; and

Whereas the Government of the People's Republic of China has officially labeled the Falun Gong meditation group a cult and has formally charged at least four members of the Falun Gong under this new law: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the Senate calls on the Government of the People's Republic of China to—

(1) release all prisoners of conscience and put an immediate end to the harassment, detention, physical abuse, and imprisonment of Chinese citizens exercising their legitimate rights to free belief, expression, and association; and

(2) demonstrate its willingness to abide by internationally accepted norms of freedom of belief, expression, and association by repealing or amending laws and decrees that restrict those freedoms and proceeding promptly to ratify and implement the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.